



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
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Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

February 4, 2002

The Honorable Dave Quall, Chair  
House Education Committee  
John L O'Brien Building  
2nd Floor, Room 228-A  
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

Dear Representative Quall:

I am writing as chair of the Committee on Children's Health and Well-Being of the Washington State Board of Health to discuss House Bill 2622, relating to promoting better oral health, which is scheduled for a hearing in your committee tomorrow.

The Board's list of *Recommended Children's Preventive Services: Ages Birth through 10 Years* notes the importance of oral health assessments during periodic physical exams. The Board is working with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Health, and the Department of Social and Health Services to explore how schools can encourage delivery of children's preventive services. Its model brochure, *Start Right—Start Healthy*, speaks to the importance of an oral cavity check for five-year-olds. A Board study, *Healthy to Learn: State Requirements for Child Health Examinations*, found that 23 states require health exams as a condition of K-12 enrollment. Three states require an oral health exam as part of a physician assessment, one requires an oral health assessment conducted by a dentist, and one recommends an oral health exam.

The Board's work supports the concepts contained in SB 6590: collaborative planning to promote age-appropriate oral health screening; oral health prevention training for physicians (I recommend including advanced registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants); and oral health coordinators in local health districts. In response to the Board's initiatives in this area, we have found that widespread agreement exists about the need to address children's oral health issues. What we have been told is that effective oral health programs cannot be developed and implemented without additional resources.

Thank you for your consideration of this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

Vickie Ybarra, RN, MPH  
Member, State Board of Health

cc: Members of the House Education Committee  
Members of the Washington State Board of Health  
Don Sloma, Washington State Board of Health  
Ree Sailors, Executive Policy Division  
Patty Hayes, Department of Health